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Date: Leaky CIA

Secrecy obviously is an essential condition for conducting any intelligence activity. Yet the Central Intelligence Agency is having difficulty in meeting it.

The CIA's function is not only to gather but also to evaluate information. The second aspect can be even more important than the first. Gathering information may tell us something about the enemy's intentions. Our evaluation of it could tell the enemy something about our own. Hence it should be kept all the more secret.

The Johnson administration denies that the CIA paper on Viet Nam which fell into the hands of a Chicago newspaper (and therefore available to the enemy upon publication) represents either government or CIA policy. We hope not because its extremely pessimistic evaluation, repeating President de Gaulle's proposal of neutralization," was rejected by Washington as a move toward surrendering the region to the Communists.

The CIA paper, whether the work of only one man, as Secretary Rusk maintains, or of more than one is nevertheless a CIA paper. It may have been just another "think piece," such as most government agencies and newspapers ask their staffs to write. But CIA thinking, individual or collective, is supposed to be secret because it is related to what is supposed to be intelligence at the highest level.

Generalizing a leak to one paper by making it available to all may help defuse domestic political repercussions to a potentially damaging evaluation. But it does not help restore confidence in the CIA either at home or abroad.—  
New York Herald Tribune